



SS. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church (Portage)
St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church (Beaverdale)
Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church (Dunlo)
Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh
Metropolitan Archbishop William C. Skurla, D.D.
Served by: Very Rev. Fr. James A. Spontak
Fr. Deacon Daniel F. Perich
Rectory: 143 Church Drive Portage, PA 15946
Phone: 814-736-9780
Website: www.ByzantineCatholic.net

Mysteries of Christian Initiation: There is to be **preparatory instruction** for parents and godparents prior to the celebration of the **Mysteries of Christian Initiation – Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist**. It is desirable that Christian Initiation be celebrated together with the Sunday Divine Liturgy, as the entire faith community welcomes its newest member. Those selected to be sponsors must be persons who are qualified to be a sponsor according to the norms of Church law and practice.

Crowning in Marriage: A **six month period of preparation** is to precede the marriage. Couples are to meet with the pastor before other arrangements are scheduled. The **Pre-Cana Program** offered by the Archeparchy in the spring of each year is a **required** part of the marriage preparation for all couples.

Holy Anointing & Pastoral Care of the Ill: Please contact the pastor prior to surgery or in the event of illness to require the **Mystery of Holy Anointing**. When you or a family member are hospitalized or enter a nursing home or other facility, **please inform the pastor**. Due to privacy regulations, hospitals and other facilities do not always notify the pastor; and it is best for the family to notify the pastor.

Mystery of Repentance (Confessions): **Saturdays: 3:00 p.m. (Portage) and 4:30 pm (Beaverdale/Dunlo)**. Also, **½ hour before services [except Sunday]**, and by appointment. Confessions are in the priest's sacristy area, before an icon of Christ, before whom we are confessing our sinfulness

Opportunities for Stewardship: Parishioners are asked to make a commitment of **Time, Talent, and Treasure...** **Work Parties** are scheduled the first Saturday of each month, and **Church Cleaning** is scheduled the first Monday, unless a Church Feast Day falls on the same date.

Troitsja & Bulletin Schedule

Sunday December 22 Troitsja: Kaleb Castel

Bulletins: Abby Koban & Ryan Lenz

Christmas--December 25

VOLUNTEERS

Sunday December 29 Troitsja: Lexi Slanoc

Bulletins: Kaleb Castel & Lexi Slanoc

Parish Sunday Bulletin Available Online and by Email Transmission



Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

My greetings for every blessing of this feast of the Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to our parishioners and to your families.

“To God Incarnate, to the nursing Infant who humbled Himself and took our form, becoming one of us in order to make us divine; to the One who later walked among us to teach us the way of salvation and who loved us so much as to give his life for it: to Him glory, honor and adoration for ever and ever. Amen” [Archbishop Joseph Raya, Byzantine Daily Worship,]

The Vigil of Christmas

- The Royal Hours of Christmas Eve [Office of Readings] are celebrated on Tuesday, December 24 at 8:00 am and include psalms; hymns; Old Testament, Epistle, and Gospel readings.
- By tradition Tuesday, December 24 may be observed as a day of the strict abstinence from meat and dairy products.
- From Christmas to Theophany [December 25 to January 4] there is no fasting and abstinence.

The Feast of Christmas—Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ

The ***“Byzantine Catholic Hymnal for Nativity and Theophany”*** will be available for services for Christmas and Theophany. They contain the traditional hymns for Christmas particular to our church in English and Church Slavonic as well as the more common Christmas Carols in English.

The hymn booklets will be on the table in the back of church. Please take a copy before going to your pew and return the booklet to the table in the back after the Divine Liturgy.

**Eastern Christian Formation Calendar
Christmas & Theophany Season**

Sunday, December 22.....	No ECF Classes
Sunday, December 29.....	No ECF Classes
Sunday, January 5, 2020.....	No ECF Classes
Sunday, January 12 2020.....	ECF Classes Resume

Mystery of Repentance [Confession]

To prepare for Christmas, the ***Mystery of Holy Repentance*** is scheduled for:

- **Sunday, December 22**, Ss. Peter & Paul, Portage: **6:00 pm**
- **Monday, December 23**, Ss. Peter & Paul, Portage: **6:00 pm.**

Parish Saint Nicholas Celebration—Thank You

A note of thanks to all who helped make the Saint Nicholas Celebration last Sunday enjoyable and memorable: to the **ECF** students for the inspiring and uplifting presentation of ***“Away In A Manger”***; to our Catechists for their help; to Kim Rocker and her family for the food and refreshments; and to the parishioners and family members who came to enjoy this gathering.

Metropolitan William's Christmas Greetings 2019

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord." [Gospel of Saint Luke 2:1-11](#)

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Dear People,

We extend to all the blessings that pour out of God's great gift to the world on the birth of his Son Jesus. We hear the Christmas story in Gospel readings, the hymns, and popular music of the season. For our children, the celebration is fresh and new as if it happened last year. For our senior members, we take the message deeper into our hearts and minds.

Our pilgrims to the Holy Land this Autumn were lifted up by their visits to the city of

Bethlehem. As did others for thousands of years, they saw the city of Bethlehem, its churches, and the actual grotto cave which marks where Mary gave birth to Jesus. The cave is below the altar in the Basilica of the Nativity. The silver star marks the event where ancient tradition recalls the spot.

The tradition has continued through a succession of Roman, Byzantine, Moslem, Crusaders, and now Palestinian control. Despite the crush of pilgrims past and present, you can see and feel the power of the profound event of birth of the Son of God. The billions and billions of prayers offered by pilgrims have enriched the holiness of Bethlehem and the Holy Land.

In his recent trip to Greccio, Italy, our Holy Father Pope Francis wrote how Saint Francis tried to spread the message of the birth of Christ. Because it is not easy or possible to make a pilgrimage to Bethlehem, Saint Francis of Assisi tried to bring the power of his pilgrim experience of the Nativity in Bethlehem to the world. He tried to bring his Bethlehem experience to those who could not make the trip to the Holy Land by recreating a living Crèche in Greccio, Italy in 1224. The tradition has spread across the world and to some of our Byzantine Churches.

For all our Byzantine churches, we bring to life our Nativity Icons and Crèches in our churches and homes. We join in the prayers of Holy Land pilgrims as well as the prayers of the shepherds and wise men. In a way, we become the shepherds and wise men. Our voices sing the words which enlighten our minds and open our hearts to the message that "God is with us."

We thank all who have worked to spread the good news through your personally reaching out to friends and family who have not understood or have forgotten the real meaning of Christmas. We live in hope that everyone who hears will be reborn in the Spirit of Christmas.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend William C. Skurla, D.

Food Pantry Donations & Giving Tree Project

Thank you for your donations of canned goods, non-perishable food, and cash for the *Portage Food Pantry* and the *Forest Hills Food Pantry* [from Beaverdale and Dunlo]. Thanks also to our parishioners for your response to the *Giving Tree* to provide gifts at Christmas for children in need.

PARISH NEWS & COMING EVENTS

Church Offering Envelopes for 2020

2020 Offering Envelopes for Saints Peter and Paul Portage are available. When you pick up your box of envelopes, please take those for family or neighbors who may not be present. Envelope numbers change; please **write your name and address** on your envelope and continue to **write your name on your envelope each week** to ensure proper credit. A line for writing your name is printed on the 2020 envelopes. If you are not registered to receive envelopes, contact the parish office.

Church Calendars for 2020

The *2020 Church Calendars* are available. Please take only one calendar per family until everyone has received a calendar. We thank our sponsors for the 2020 Calendars: *Serenko-Claar Funeral Home* (Ss. Peter & Paul, Portage); *Jean Kinley Funeral Home* (Beaverdale & Dunlo)

Remember In Prayer

Please pray for the health of *Vaughn George* [Memorial Hospital]; *Ella Hoffman*; *Barry Krisko*; *Marian Simala*; *Jennifer Crum Bailey*; *Michael Barelick*; *Kennady Grace Spaid*; *Joseph Lysic*; *Rose Single*; *Mary Donnelly*; *George Pyo Jr.*; *Daniel Zalznock*; *John Rakar*; *Bernadette Kostan*, *Patty Haschak*; *Shawn Crum*; *Dennis Ratosky, Sr.*; *Dorothy, Phil* and *Cathy Walters*; *Alina Rusnak*; *Ruby Moore*; *Charles* and *Joan Plishka*; *Tom Goncher*; *Patrick & Joan Ditko*; *Helena Ditko*; *Cliff Inman*; *Father Paul Tigyer*; *Kelly Colwell*; *Sarah Kelt*; *Mary Beth Blackburn*; and all the ill & homebound.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of **+Andrew James**, brother-in-law of Stella Raptosh.

Pilgrim Vocation Icon

During the week of December 22, *Kathy Sekerak* will have the *Pilgrim Vocation Icon*.

The list to sign up for the *Pilgrim Vocation Icon* to pray for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and monastic religious life is in the narthex. Please remember seminarians of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh: **Lector Kyprian Wojciechowski**; **Lector Robert Jones**; **Seminarians John Welch**; **Luke Iyengar Nathaniel Tapsak**; Diaconate Studies candidates; and all of the Seminary community.

Sanctuary Candle

The Sanctuary Candle is offered this week at Saints Peter and Paul, Portage in memory of **+Mary**, **+Michael**, **+John**; **+Mary** requested by Kathy Sekerak.

"O Christ, what shall we offer You for your coming on earth as a Man for our sake? Every creature that has its being from You gives thanks to You: the angels offer hymns of praise, the heavens give a star; wise men present their gifts and the shepherds, their wonder; the earth provides a cave and the desert a manger. As for us, we offer You a Mother, a Virgin Mother. O God who are from all eternity, have mercy on us!" [Vesper Stichera, Nativity of Our Lord]

Visits to the Homebound

If there was someone not included in the pastoral visits to homebound parishioners or those in nursing homes for Confession and the Eucharist in preparation for Christmas and Theophany, and who would like to be visited, please call the rectory at your earliest convenience.

Liturgical Chant--The Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ

- For the Vigil Divine Liturgy [Vespers with Divine Liturgy] on Christmas Eve [6:00 pm], a booklet with the service including all the prescribed proper parts will be distributed for use at this service.
- The Troparion and other prescribed parts of the Divine Liturgy for the ***Birth of Our Lord – Christmas*** are on pages 289-294.
- The Troparion and other prescribed parts of the Divine Liturgy for **Thursday, December 26**, the ***Synaxis of the Theotokos***, are on pages 294-297.
- The Troparion and other prescribed parts for **Friday, December 27**, the Feast of the ***Holy Apostle and First Martyr Stephen*** are on pages 298-300.
- The Troparion and other prescribed parts for **Sunday, December 29**, ***Resurrection Troparion Tone 4***, may be found on p. 141-142; for the ***Sunday after the Nativity and Memory of Joseph, David, and Apostle James, Brother of the Lord*** on p.302-305.
- The ***“Our Father”***, ***Tone 4*** may be found on p.69.
- Please note instructions at the beginning of the Liturgy for opening hymns etc.

OTHER NEWS & EVENTS

Forest Hills Community Band 2019 Christmas Concert

- ***Galleria Mall, Richland*** **Sunday, December 22** 2:00 pm. *Free Admission.*

GCU Scholarship Applications Now Being Accepted

GCU is accepting applications for scholarship awards until December 31; available for **GCU** members who are college students or in secondary education program; two athletic scholarships (1 female and 1 male) are available. Details and application: www.GCUusa.com/pages/scholarships.

Homebound and Nursing Home Residents—Remember in Prayer

At Home: SS Peter & Paul (Portage): Dorothy Billy; Catherine Czapp Louise Halovich; Joseph Mandichak; Michelle Maskal; Dorothy Majer; Joseph Raptosh [*St. Michael's, Canonsburg*]; Stella Raptosh; Rita Thornton; Cathy Walters; Helen Zaher; **St. Mary (Beaverdale):** Nancy Andrako; Catherine McGough;

Nursing & Other Care Facilities:

- **Saint Benedict Manor, Carrolltown,** Catherine Thrower [Dunlo];
- **Arbutus Park Manor:** Margaret Rachael [Dunlo];
- **Autumn View:** June Nezneski;
- **Amber Hills Ebensburg:** *Father Ronald Borsuk*
- **John Paul II Manor, Cresson:** Kathryn Mackovyak
- **Rose of Sharon Home, Saint Michael:** Anna Garanich
- **Just Like Home Personal Care, Cresson:** Dorothy Resconich

The Sunday bulletin is posted on the parish website, www.ByzantineCatholic.net. Also, like us on **Facebook at Sts Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church**. To receive weekly bulletin by email send your email address to james_armand_spontak@verizon.net with this request.

Liturgical Schedule *Nativity of Our Lord*—December 22, 2019

Sunday of the Holy Ancestors of Christ—Sunday before Christmas

Saturday December 21

Dunlo **5:00 PM** Vigil Divine Liturgy

Sunday December 22

Portage **9:00 AM** **Sunday Divine Liturgy**
 [+Catherine & +Susan Sekerak; and +Robert Novotny, by Kathy Sekerak]
 Portage **6:00 PM** Mystery of Repentance [Confessions]

Monday December 23

Portage **6:00 PM** Mystery of Repentance [Confessions]

Tuesday, December 24

Portage **8:00 AM** **The Royal Hours of Christmas**

The Nativity of Our Lord—Christmas

Christmas Eve—Tuesday, December 24

Dunlo **6:00 PM** **Christmas Vigil Divine Liturgy**
 Vespers with the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
 Portage **9:30 PM** Christmas Carols & Hymns from Compline
10:00 PM **Christmas Divine Liturgy**

Christmas Day—Wednesday, December 25

Portage **9:45 AM** Christmas Carols
10:00 AM **Christmas Divine Liturgy**

Thursday, December 26 **Synaxis of the Theotokos & Ever-Virgin Mary**

Portage **7:00 PM** Divine Liturgy

Friday, December 27 **Feast of St. Stephen—Apostle, Deacon & First Martyr**

Portage **9:00 AM** Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 28

Portage **2:30 PM** Mystery of Repentance [Confessions]
 Beaverdale **4:30 PM** Mystery of Repentance [Confessions]

Sunday after Christmas

The Holy and Just Joseph; David; Holy Apostle James, Brother of the Lord.

Saturday December 28

Beaverdale **5:00 PM** Vigil Divine Liturgy

Sunday December 29 Portage **9:00 AM** **Sunday Divine Liturgy** [+George Letzo, by Julie Brenna]